



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

For Release July 6, 1990

Megan Durham (202) 208-4131

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, NAVY SIGN WETLANDS AGREEMENT;
SERVICE PRODUCES ONE MILLIONTH WETLAND MAP

No one is planning to change the famous slogan to "Loose lips sink swamps," but the Navy is embarking on a new program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to map and conserve wetlands on naval stations across the country.

"Wetlands are enormously important to clean water and to fish and wildlife, and the first step in conserving them is knowing exactly where they are," noted Constance Harriman, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has just produced its 1 millionth wetland map for the United States, and we are pleased to provide this mapping service to help the Navy identify and conserve its wetlands."

Jacqueline Schafer, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Installations and Environment), said the Navy has responsibility for protecting wetlands at Naval installations across the country. "We want to be sure the Navy is doing its part to help meet the President's goal of conserving the Nation's wetlands," Schaefer said.

(over)

The two Assistant Secretaries signed an agreement on wetlands conservation at a June 26 ceremony at the Naval Station Mayport near Jacksonville, Florida. They then traveled to the Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory Project in St. Petersburg, where they watched as the one-millionth wetland map copy produced by the Service rolled off the presses. The one-millionth map, of the Mayport Quadrangle, shows the Naval Station Mayport and the St. Johns River opening on to the Atlantic Ocean.

Production of the maps is a painstaking and detailed process that involves field investigations and skilled interpretation of color infrared high altitude photographs. The maps delineate wetland boundaries and provide information concerning wetland types, location, and size.

The detailed maps are widely used by developers, local officials, and government agencies to evaluate whether proposed projects will affect wetlands. The Service has completed maps for 61 percent of the lower 48 states and 18 percent of Alaska.

Under the agreement signed June 26, the Navy will reimburse the Fish and Wildlife Service up to \$1 million for a new and intensified wetland mapping program for priority Naval installations, and will arrange for Service personnel to conduct field reviews of areas to be mapped.

More than half of the 215 million acres of wetlands existing in the lower 48 states when the Pilgrims landed has been destroyed. Locating and describing the remaining wetlands through the National Wetlands Inventory Project is an important part of the nation's overall wetlands conservation program. Wetlands provide essential habitat for endangered species, migratory birds, sport and commercial fisheries, and many other species; help catch floodwaters and buffer storms; and filter sediments and impurities in water.

National Wetlands Inventory map availability information may be obtained by calling 1-800-USA-MAPS, (in Virginia, 703-648-6045). Callers should have the USGS topographic map name and state available before calling. Maps cost from \$1.75 to \$3.50 plus a \$6.50 per order processing charge. Maps may be ordered from U.S. Geological Survey Earth Science Information Centers and from other state and local distribution centers. A list of these centers can be obtained from the National Wetlands Inventory, Suite 101, Monroe Bldg., 9720 Executive Center Dr., St. Petersburg, FL 33702.